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THE VISION BEATIFIC

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THE VISION BEATIFIC

BY

REV. JOHN D. WALSHE, S.J.

With a frontispiece
by Dorothy Wallace

Annotated Edition for Students

New York
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1928

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DEDICATION

TO the memory of the sainted Padres, the fragrance of whose Christian virtue still lingers in the earthly paradise of Santa Clara Valley, this little poem is affectionately inscribed.

The Author

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

Many poets have tried to picture Heaven—many poets in many ages.

The Greek poets had their Elysian Fields in the Fortunate Isles, bordered by the river Lethe—a domain where the guiltless followed the heart's desire, in a realm of eternal springtime, eternal happiness and song. The evil-doers, in the thronged, wide-gated, somber Underworld, wandered as desolate shades, looking longingly back to earth, while they told again and again the stories of their lives of old.

Dante sees the evil in the Afterworld in graded circles of descent toward utter stagnation; and he sees the good in orderly circles of ascent toward God. He sees all sins as rising out of selfishness; and he pictures disorderly souls as suffering the inevitable reaction of their sins. The deed always returns upon the doer.

On the upward flight, Dante pictures all courageous souls as ascending out of selfishness toward Heaven, toward humility, toward the love and light that abide in God. We can never forget the great Dantean line:

In His will lies our peace.

Milton, in his *Paradise Lost*, pictures the glooms of Hell and the glories of Heaven. But his terrors and splendors are lacking in human interest, the thing that touches the common man.

As one latter-day venture into the Unseen we are glad to welcome *The Vision Beatific*, a poem by the Reverend John D. Walshe of California.

For a single blissful day, the beneficent guardian angel of this poet permits him to visit the Heaven of his long years of prayer—to note the adoring hierarchies of angels, to hear the seraphic choirs, to catch all that a mortal may of "the vehemence of ecstasy" in the presence of the supernal.

He finds the great saints of every age, finds his parents, his kindred, his friends, all living

> Where love is vocal and where feeling speaks.

He discovers Heaven to be a place where he finds the high designs of infinite wisdom unfolded, and our deepest desires satisfied.

When the Madonna gives him welcome, the poet cries out:

> What! Queen of Heaven! and dost thou gracious deign
> To raise me up and fold me to thy breast
> And give to me a Mother's welcome home!

When, within the Empyrean, hearing the divine harmonies, he exclaims:

All Eden throbs to music's pulsing tide.

This Vision breathes of love, and rises to its climax in the third canto:

O Love Divine, all other loves beyond,
Abyss no seraph's plummet e'er could sound,
Thou glowing sea whose tides are ever full!
Eons have passed, but not thy golden floods:
When time is o'er thy tides shall still roll on.
* * * * * * *
Yea, God is Love, All Love, Substantial Love.

This beautiful Vision will carry uplifting and comforting for many.

EDWIN MARKHAM.

Foreword

I APPRECIATE the honor of introducing this poem to the reader as keenly as I feel my inability to do justice in a few prefatory words, to the task with which it is associated. The subject is HEAVEN, man's destined home, unless through perseverance in sin and final impenitence he deliberately forfeits his inheritance. Than this subject there is nothing that should claim greater attention or arouse keener interest.

Those who claim that there is a middle course, that it is possible to seek for the good things of earth without neglecting those of Heaven, may not altogether be wrong, provided they seek *first* the Kingdom of Heaven. Indeed this is the only way "to garden the earth with the flowers of Paradise."

To arouse within the soul of the reader a desire for things greater than the paltry, pass-

ing goods of earth, and, incidentally, a determination to do what must be done in order to reach the blessedness with which goodness must inevitably be crowned, is the purpose of this sweet little poem of Father Walshe. The burden of the author's lofty message is this: "We are made for God, and nothing but God manifested in Vision Beatific can satisfy the yearnings of the soul."

When first I read the poem I thought that the Reverend Author delayed too long on what may be regarded as the Symbolism of Heaven, the weak endeavors of man to describe the indescribable, to visualize the invisible. But when I saw the trend of his thought, how from what appeals to the senses—palms of victory and paeans of praise, white robes and musical instruments—he passed to the essential beatitude of Heaven—the knowledge and love of God—I felt the ecstasy of it all and, in his own beautiful language, I longed

> Into the ocean depths of Light and Life
> To plunge and lose myself.

D. J. KAVANAGH, S.J.

THE VISION BEATIFIC

Prologue

S one, whom duty calls āwāy
From hearth and loving friends and all
That have entwined themselves about
A heart responsive to the touch
Of tender love, will try to gain
An insight to his destined home,
The Country whither he is called,
Its people and their mode of life,
Their aspirations and their toils,
Their joys, if joys perchance there be,
Their sorrows, if in darkness set
Their lot, like his, is one of woe;
So we, who onward journeying
Approach that land, the Pilgrim's goal,
Whence none is fated to return—
We, who must leave our home and friends,
Our hoarded wealth, our house of clay—
This body—frail and doomed to groan
Beneath the ever-growing load
Of sorrows, sadness, sickness, sin,

Should seek, betimes, with eager hearts,
For knowledge of our Fatherland
Beyond the tomb, beyond the skies,
Our haven, home, our Paradise!

O Paradise, mere thought of thee,
In sorrow's hour what solace sweet!
In toil and pain how heartening!
In weaknesses how full of strength!
With hope's bright bow it arches o'er
The clouds of yesterday that hung
In threatening blackness o'er our lives;
It lights our path against despair
That, dark as death and black as hell,
Would else engulf us in its depths.

O Paradise, to muse on thee
Ennobles life and gives it all
A meaning else unknown or lost!
Far more than agitated dust,
Far more than wandering dream is he
Who looks beyond the fantasies
Of life to blessedness to come.
The thought of Paradise uplifts
The soul to loftier, holier spheres
To hold communion with the Saints
And Angels in the Court of God
And makes us feel how truly spake

The great Apostle, as adown
He gazed, in vision rapt, to voice
The message which all men may read,
In characters made bold and large
Upon the crumbling walls of time:
"No lasting city have we here
But look for one that is to come."

The Vision Beatific

Canto First

Wherein I meet my Angel Guardian

I

O FOR a day the blue-arched dome above,
In God's own happy kingdom of the blest,
Where all is halcyon peace and rest and bliss;
And Jesus' glory the unfading light!
Home of the soul! City of God, whose walls
Are jasper; whose foundations garnished are
In topaz, sapphire and all precious stones;
Whose shining pavement is translucent gold;
Whose portals wide are all of glistening pearl.
With flowers ambrosial how thy gardens smile,
While dancing rills enlace the emerald meads
With silver bands, whose jeweled ripplets break
In magic music on the velvet banks.
Groves amaranthine where Archangels tread,
Enchanting arbors, bathed in lustrous light,

That echo songs of birds such as our earth
Has never heard. And oh! to taste the fruits
That bloom full luscious on the Tree of Life;
And drink the waters crystalline that flow
Without surcease, in shimmering cataracts,
From the bright throne of God and of the Lamb!

The Poet's wildest dreams of fields elysian,
The Vale of Cashmere, the Bandusian fount,
Evanish quite at fleeting glimpse of thee.
The soaring wings of Fancy palsied fall;
And human mind doth reel and faint away,
When Paradise first opes upon the view.
An hour of Heaven is worth an age of pain.
To win it, earthly travail, sweat and tears
Were as a mole-hill to high Everest peak.
One rapturous moment would eclipse the joys
Of earth and all the spheres in one combined,
As stars are quenched by the resplendent sun.
For what is Heaven but bliss without alloy,
A boundless sea of beatific love!

II

"Oh! Angel dear, my God-appointed guide,
Canst not accord me this my rapt desire?—
Remove the veil that hides thy glorious face
And let me see at last, and free converse

With thee, thou closest comrade of my life
From infancy's first wail to parting sigh.
O beauteous Angel! Prince of Heaven's Court!
So wise, so mighty, loving, gentle, kind!
My strong defender 'gainst the evil one;
Sagacious counselor in hours of doubt;
My faithful guide and stay in faltering steps
O'er stony paths, with brier and thorn beset
And many a covert snare and pitfall dark!
When other friends I trusted coldly changed
And failed, like broken reeds or drifting ice,
Not e'en my sins and base forgetfulness
Could banish thee in coldness from my side.
Thou loyal friend, unchangeable, benign!
Thou more than Mother in thy tenderness!
What constant care and loving watchfulness,
At garish noon and darkling midnight hour,
Thou didst bestow upon thy wayward child!
Yea, let me see thee now, and clasp thee close,
And tell thee of my endless gratitude.
And oh! one favor add to all the rest—
One crowning boon to overtop them all—
List! List in pity to the life-long urge
That ceaseless burns within this breast of flame!
Take, take me Heavenward for a single day!"

Such was the craving in mine inmost soul;
So wholly was my being in its grasp

O'ermastering, I sudden felt myself
Transmuted to a being new and strange.
I felt beside, *beyond* my corporal self—
A spirit free, untrameled and unfleshed;
With qualities endued that Angels own
And disembodied Spirits glorified.

III

My Angel Guardian, hitherto unseen,
Now flashed himself upon my ravished view.
There, there he stood—his beauteous face revealed
And his majestic form. Soft rays of light
Enshrined him round. Benignly sweet he smiled.
My soul was inly thrilled to ecstasy.
The vibrant air seemed rife with ripplings sweet
Of silver chimes; albeit good sooth to tell
He uttered not a syllable or sound,
But mirrored clear the thought upon my mind,
As is the mode with beings spiritual.
Voiced humanly, the Angel's words were these:

"Night upon night I saw thee gaze, dear child,
Into the brightly studded firmament
With awe and wonder; while thy soul was wont
To melt in praise of Him who bade it shine.
I witnessed too the passion of thy urge
To wing thy flight past all those starry worlds—

Sweet stellar blossoms planted in the blue—
And bide awhile within the realms of bliss.

Intensity of yearning gives thee claim,
E'en as the yearning of the Magdalene
To find the body of the Crucified
Begot the blossom of fruition fair.
Come then, my child, and let me show to thee
Some marvels of Omnipotent design
Thick-strewn along the avenues to Heaven!
Such is the Will of Him who rules on high."

IV

My heart and soul aflame with grateful love,
I clasp the Angel's kindly proffered hand,
To guide me and support my feebleness;
All unafraid, beside my trusted guide,
On pinions of the soul's impelling will
I spring aloft into the blue serene.
Right on we speed; we cleave the azure deep,
Unruffled as the placid crystal lake
When traversed by a ray of silver light.

V.

"How brightly shines the Lunar Sphere, dear
Guide!
It grows in loveliness as we advance:

It soft illumines half the earth beneath,
Mantling with gentle beams each hill and dale,
Each cliff and cape, each snow-capped sentinel
And cross-adorned spire, transforming streams
And lakes and seas to shimmering silver zones.
Their mantles broad the clouds spread o'er the meads,
While checkered shadows 'neath the oak trees dance;
Then like wild harts they nimbly scale the sides
Of yon steep mountain range. Ah, me! how fair
God's lamp tonight! My heart is all athrob
With praise of Him who made that silvery orb
And hung it in the sky to light man's way!"

"'Tis meet, dear child, thy spirit should be stirred
By love's own transports, all instinct with praise
Of Him who bounteous made the Queen of Night,
And set her in the deep cerulean.
Yet but a drop of morning dew is this
On the great bosom of God's universe."

We sudden flee with speed, immeasurable
By finite means, and by our finite minds
Incomprehensible, to realms beyond
The influence of the sun. I backward look
Upon the little planets and our earth—
Like toys they seem, and like a toy the sun

Whose golden chariot guides their orbit true,
And reins them ever in their headlong course.

"Where are we now?" I ask my heavenly Guide;
"Amid the suns are we," my Angel smiles—
"A hundred times a hundred thousand suns,
That fling their radiance through the worlds unknown
To man, and in harmonic motion sing
His praise that made them, and His glory show."

Through sapphire seas uncharted, that disclose
To the astonished eye new stellar worlds
Of endless splendor and variety—
Bewildering marvels of His skill divine—
On, on and ever on our flight we wing.
And yet, 'tis but the setting of the gem,
The threshold of the King's eternal home.

Still on and on through space ethereal,
Right through the endless vast of His domain
To the extremest verge—if verge there be—
The outposts of creation standing wide;
Beyond whose shining walls and bastions
I gaze adown into the dark profound
Of *possible* existences, that wait
But the Creator's nod to be or live.

"Have I not guessed aright, dear Angel mine?"
"No!—Suffer not wild Fancy on the wing
To sweep thee into groundless fantasies.
Save in the Mind of the Omnipotent
The 'possibles' are nowhere to be found."

VI

Oft have I seen on buoyant wings outstretched
And motionless, an eagle brooding o'er
Some steep abyss. So hovered we a space
O'er nature's outmost rim and battlements,
Mid darkness dense and breathless silences.
A feeling strange of loneliness and loss
My spirit sudden holds in thraldom's grasp.
Into the primal nothingness, from whence
His Mercy called me, lapsing back am I?
In terror dire I seek my Angel's side.
He beams on me a heartening radiant smile;
Whereat I see new rays of gladsome light
Speed on to earth, Hope's rainbow to create
Amid the clouds in some despairing breast.

"Since thou hast scanned some of the handiwork
Of the Creator's Fingers, broadcast strown
O'er all the firmament, it is His Will—
His word benign—that I conduct thee hence
To His elysian palace and thy home.

Then wilt thou laud Him all the more for what,
Within the mansions blest, He hath prepared
For those who love Him true and serve Him well."

Struck dumb with sweet amaze, all words and thoughts
That might befit my gratitude escape.

Again I glance adown toward stars and suns.
My vision seeks the ball terrestrial—
Of God's creation 'tis the veriest speck.
Ah! why should human hearts entwine themselves,
And make so much ado about that speck—
Too oft, alas! to their own self-undoing.

VII

Hast ever felt a soul-bestirring thrill
While gazing on the loveliness of dawn?
Hast ever stood amazed, thy soul afire
To see prismatic flames in Polar skies
Setting the Northern dark ablaze with light?
That witching beauty all, though multiplied
Ten thousand-fold, were feeble glimmerings
Of misty light, to that which met my gaze—
Those rays of glory that escaped from Heaven
To form a halo round its gates of bliss.

Canto Second

Wherein I tread elysian fields and meet with God's elect

I

"THE Empyrean," quoth my Guide,—
"Behold!
Here reigns our God in manifested light,
Who dwells in power and presence everywhere."
At magic touch the regal gates swing wide
To welcome us within the portals blest.

With heart upleaping wild with ecstasy,
Clasping my Angel's hand, I venture in.
Oh! God, what peace untold! What blessed calm!
All utterance fails at what mine eyes behold.
Unbidden tears of joy in torrents flow,
And speechless gratitude o'erwhelms my soul.
A peal triumphant now ascends that shakes
The vaults of Heaven. "That peal," my Angel said,
"That burst of joy ascends whene'er a soul,
New-ransomed by the Lamb, doth enter bliss."

II

What floods of holy light—O Light Divine!—
Come streaming forth from the eternal Throne
Of Him, Light Uncreated, flooding all
Elysium with lustrous brilliancy.
O Blessed Light, whose lucent beams my soul
Enkindle into joy! Light crystal-pure,
Yet seeming tinged with ever-varying hues
That robe the blest in glory iridescent
While whelming them in holiest delight!

What throngs of splendor in that Light I view!
Unnumbered hosts of beings exquisite,
In circles within circles, tier on tier,
Extending far and wide, and ranged about
The hallowed Throne whereon the Infinite—
The Deity unveils to rapture's gaze.
Now prostrate they in adoration's hush,
Now thrilling Heaven's dome with tuneful praise;
While from ten thousand censers incense-clouds,
Upcircling, canopy the sacred Mount.

"Those beauteous beings, child, you now behold,
Comprise in Heaven the nine ANGELIC CHOIRS.
As Alp o'er Alp, see tow'ring 'bove the rest
The glorious MICHAEL, Prince of Heaven's Hosts,

Who vanquished the arch-rebel Lucifer
And thrust him from the heights into the pit.

In brilliance tow'ring, too, view GABRIEL
Who bore to Mary, Israel's peerless one,
The tidings of redemption unto all.
Nor less than these in splendor, RAPHAEL,
Tobias' faithful guide and stalwart shield;
Angelic bearer of the gift of sight.
These bright Archangels, all th' Angelic Choirs,
Rejoice to greet and welcome thee to Heaven."

III

How tell my joy of soul when I am led
In honor by my Guide through Choir on Choir,
A fondly greeting to receive from each!
O bliss to feel I'm loved, e'en as I love,
Most truly, ardently, fraternally!
To fraternize with Angels—what delight!—
The first fair blossoms of Omnipotence,
First rays divine of His own Loveliness,
First masterpieces of His plastic Hand!

IV

Again I look, and lo! what countless hosts
Of other beings bless my wondering sight!
What types of beauty rare, what endless charms,

In harmony with divers merits won!
My wonder witnessing, the Angel said:
"The SAINTS in glorious Hierarchies are they;
Their wanderings are o'er, the desert passed;
At home are they in their own Father's house,
Full basking in the Light Ineffable
And Beauty of His Countenance revealed,
And resting in the Bosom of their God."

Supernal *Beauty*, ravishing, divine!
O who shall tell of Thee? A little glance,
A flash—the human heart, as lightning-struck,
Were instant stilled. Alone the 'Light of Glory'
Can nerve the soul to bear that vehemence
Of ecstasy. Man's vaunted loveliness,
Does it deserve the name? At best it melts
Like snowflakes on the brook; while Thine,
O God,
Stands permanent as Thy eternal Throne.
Created things with blemishes are linked:
To Science's far-penetrating gaze
The Day King's brightness spots of murk reveals;
With all her peerless charms the Queen of Flowers
Fast-wedded is to most ungrateful thorns;
But ah! Thy loveliness is unalloyed,
Is all divine, and ages mar it not.

How shadowy are all created charms!
But Thine, O Radiant Truth, thy charms are real—
Reality thy Beauty Increate!
Thy Beauty is thine own Substantial Self.

V

"Those radiant bands I see of beauteous souls
In glittering white, like Selmon's glittering snows—
Dear Angel, who are they?"—"These are the Choirs
Of VIRGINS blest. About the Lamb divine
How close they throng, like lilies that are bound
With golden band and made to seem as one."
"And who be these so singularly bright?"
"Yon Soul, so star-like, the Iberian maid,
TERESA, Mystic Doctor of the Church
And glory of Carmel. Undaunted child
Of high desire was she; her seraph soul
Was Love's own tabernacle all aglow—
Sweet blending of the eagle and the dove.
Beside Teresa stands SIENA'S MAID;
Of miracles a very wonder-worker,
A spring profound of knowledge Heaven-infused:
Of future happenings a wondrous seer,

Two Sovereign Pontiffs wisely guided she
In matters of high moment to the Church.
Nigh unto her you note a virgin fair
Who on blest Catherine's footsteps closely pressed—
The Sweet Peruvian ROSE, who brought at birth
Her Heaven-stamped name, since her bright countenance
A striking likeness bore unto a rose.
Loved Eire's treasured virgin-flower behold,
The bright and spotless LILY OF KILDARE!
Of heavenly predilection she from birth,
Most pure of heart and virginal in mind;
Her constant thirst was for the Fount of Life,
Her soul's aspirings for her Spouse divine."

Exultingly in chorus list their cry:
"O Soul! made stainless in the Blood of Christ,
Most ardent welcome do we tender thee!"

VI

"In little less of radiance than those
Another group, dear Guide, with joy I note."
"Yea, these the noble band of PENITENTS.
And she whose beauty far outshines them all—
The Queen of Penitents, the Star of Hope

Unto the fallen, groping in the gloom
Of fell despair—none other can she be
Than Christ's adoring lover, Magdalene."

The picture flashes lifelike on my thought
Of Simon's feast at Galilee, when she
The sinner, fleeing thither with her shame,
Hard by the Master kneeling, kissed his feet,
Washed them with tears and dried them with her
hair;
Then brake the alabaster box and poured
The costly spikenard on those sacred feet.
The Pharisee—self-righteous host forsooth—
Amazed that Jesus shrank not from her touch,
Was awe-struck as he heard the gentle Lord:
"Thy sins, O woman, are forgiven thee!
Thy faith hath made thee whole! Go thou in
peace!"

No brighter jewels can adorn thy crown,
Thrice happy Magdalene! than these thy tears.
O tears of penitence whose pearly flood,
Commingling with sweet Calvary's ruby tide,
Can render snowy-white the crimson soul!
Soft zephyr sighs that breathe along the chords—
The jarring chords of the rebellious soul—
Attuning them anew to melody
Celestial in the grateful ear of God!

VII

"These souls that glisten, constellation-like,
Yet seem the center of great groups of stars—
What bright immortals they?" "The FOUNDERS, child,
Of various Orders in the flock of Christ.
So parent-like, behold them circled round
Endearingly by all their grateful sons.
Conspicuous on brilliant thrones behold
Those Saints who wrought with fire of holy zeal
And burning love ineffable to free
Frail earthbound mortals from the gyves of sin:
Parent of life Monastic, BENEDICT,
Whose four and twenty Pontiffs ruled in Rome.
On parchments, proof against the moth of time,
With loving zeal his children did inscribe
The Sacred Text of God's eternal word:
'Gainst savage Goth and ruthless Vandal bands
In cloistered crypts they shrined the Book divine.

Lo! peerless BERNARD, Knight of Heaven's Queen,
Whose sword was never sheathed in justice' cause.
Admired of all who seek to serve the Lord
In all His needy members upon earth,
Beloved of dumb creation FRANCIS stands.
The Albigensian scourge, blest DOMINIC;

The Watchdog brave and faithful of the Lord,
Inflaming hearts with torch of love divine.
Elect of God, LOYOLA, battle-scarred
At Pampeluna's fort in country's cause,
Christ's armor donned within Manresa's cave
To battle with the very hosts of hell.
PRECEPTORS too are there whose children learned
To shape youth's plastic mind in Christian mold.
DE PAUL, the open-handed pitying friend
Of all the sore-distressed and destitute,
Whose noble daughters doth a grateful world
Acclaim 'The Angels of the Battlefield.' "

VIII

"And yonder splendent throng so lustrous fair
In royal purple, bearing victor's palms?"
"The army glorious and triumphant these,
Who generous shed their blood for Jesus' Name.
Among them eminent, the BAPTIST see!
The Desert-Trumpet of the great Messiah,
The bold and fiery Lash of regal vice.
How wielded he the thunders of high Heaven
To bring 'the brood of vipers' to repent,
Who else had surely felt 'the wrath to come.'

See STEPHEN! proto-martyr of the cause,
Felled 'neath the blows of fiends in human guise
While prayed he Heaven's forgiveness for their
crime.

And him who smiling, on the gridiron lay
(For Christ's dear sake) as 'twere a rosy bed—
The youthful LAWRENCE, who could jest at death.
Note PLUNKETT, too, of soul as valorous
Whom Eire, martyr-nation, proudly claims;
Him, too, of Gaul, the AREOPAGITE—
The noble veteran of a hundred years,
Whose spirit great, Domitian's cruel thongs
Nor all his tortures dire, could e'er subdue.
CECILIA, Music's heavenly patroness;
And AGNES, sweetly brave though but a child;
Famed CATHERINE, glorious Alexandrian maid,
Of high aspiring, stout of heart and mind,
Who, vanquishing the proud philosophers,
As willing captives led them unto Christ;
And BONIFACE, that gladly gave his life
For the conversion of a mighty race.
Staunch MORE, the Chancellor, and CAMPION
Observe; while near them BECKET shines;
And lion-hearted JOAN, the warrior-maid.
With loud acclaim, hark! how they welcome thee
As fellow-citizen of Heaven's elect."

IX

Heroes and heroines of every clime!
The purest, choicest, rarest flowers of earth—
Hail, glorious victors, laurel-crowned, all hail!
No withered bays enwreath your noble brows,

Nor need have ye of gilded monuments
And brazen epitaphs to trump your fame.

Ye honored are of God who kens the heart,
And crowned before the whole celestial Court
With diadems of fadeless radiance.
E'en as the diamond, flashing in the sun,
Absorbs his rays, and in the dark of night
Like to another sun irradiates;
So ye, O glorified! drink in the beams
Of Justice' Sun and radiate like gods.

X

"These yonder, Angel, prithee who are they?
As stars of the first magnitude they shine,
Or 'brightness of the firmament?'" "These are
The FATHERS and the DOCTORS of the Church—
Pillars of learning, sanctity and zeal:
AUGUSTINE, AMBROSE, BASIL and JEROME,
AQUINAS the Angelic, CHRYSOSTOM—
Names hallowed that shall ever ring adown
Fame's brightest corridors in golden peals."

XI

"But loftier than all of these I note
Another band, bedecked in princely mode
Bespeaking office high, which once they held
In Jesus' shepherd-kingdom upon earth:
The APOSTLES, are they not, dear Angel mine?"

"Yea, truly so, and PETER at their head
With fit pre-eminence—great Proto-Pontiff,
Apostolic Prince and Kingly Claviger.
Beside him shines the quondam ruthless wolf
Of Jesus' infant fold; but felled to earth
By Jesus' voice, Saul, instant changed to PAUL,
Arose 'a Vessel of Election' bright
Whose rays the mists of error would dispel
In Gentile lands, and Israel's path illume.
Ranked glorious with the Apostolic band
Are XAVIER who evangeled Eastern lands;
And CLAVER, tender father to the slaves
In Carthagena's mart like cattle sold;
Blest VINCENT FERRER, famed of word and work,
Whose tireless toil brought countless multitudes
Into the Fold, and peace to warring realms;
And EIRE'S LOVED APOSTLE, world-renowned.
Who welded Erin so to Peter's rock
No power on earth or hell can loose the bond:
With many more of many tribes and tongues.
The myriad souls surrounding them comprise
The golden garnering of their God-like zeal.
With hearty greeting, lo! they welcome thee!"

XII

Observe I now, with hallowed glow bedight
Befiitting their exalted rank, as near
Akin to the great King Himself, Saints ANNE

And JOACHIM, through whose most ardent sighs
Was granted, in life's eve, th' Aurora fair—
Mary Immaculate—to usher in
The Sun of Justice, our sweet Savior-Babe.
In glory's radiant light with them I see
The Virgin-Mother's virgin-consort JOSEPH—
Great Foster-father to th' Incarnate Word.
Angelic ward of Israel's fair flower
And his Redeemer blest. By Heaven's decree
The 'Just Man's' hand did guide the tender steps
Of Mary's Child, while faithful shielding both
From every adverse wind and shade of harm—
Earth's trinity reflecting the divine!
From these to have this greeting—what a bliss!
"Come, ransomed soul! Come, blessed one! and share
Our glory in the Kingdom of our God!"

XIII

Then spake my Guide: "Remember, child, that all
Of God's elect, both men and angels bright—
Howbeit as star from star diversified
In glory's just degrees—compose but one
Great family of brethren true and fond.
Together all are bound in links of love
That forgéd are, and jointly interlocked

Within the furnace-glow of love intense
In the great Heart of God's Paternity."

Society thrice happy beyond dreams!
Sweet fellowship of men and angels blest!
What! counted I among your shining ranks?
And have I share in all your social joys?
Oh! if in yon sad vale of woe and tears
The sweet companionship of the refined
And nobly good, brings happiness untold;
What is't to see and freely to commune
With all God's chosen friends in Paradise!

XIV

Whence these familiar figures that approach—
All smiles, all joy, all love? Oh! God, they are
My cherished PARENTS, KINDRED, COMRADES,
FRIENDS!
To part with them on earth was anguish keen
That well-nigh snapped the life-chords of the heart
Whose pulsing throbbed in unison with theirs.

What tender, inexpressible delight!
To see them, greet them, grasp their hands once
more!
O hour of purest bliss that well o'erpays
The pangs of separation! Now restored

The raptures of love's welcoming embrace,
While soul enfoldeth soul—how lovingly!
Reunion longed-for, and forever blest!
And this in Paradise—where youth ne'er fades,
Where beauty's beaming eye doth ne'er grow dim,
And Death, his leaden scepter never wields;
Where Love is vocal and where Feeling speaks;
Where heart responds to heart in golden tones
Of soulful melody—as harp to harp
Echoes in sympathetic symphony.

Must not this joy all prior joys encrown?
In Heaven itself can aught remain to add
A new delight?—The meadow dewdrop this
To seas of bliss that still await the soul.

Canto Third

Wherein my yearning soul is blest with bliss supreme

I

TO her 'of womankind the noblest boast,
The Mother, Daughter, Spouse of the Most High,'
The VIRGIN-MOTHER of the Savior-God,
My Angel Guardian now conducts my steps—
To her, the masterpiece and sovereign crown
Of all creation wide—if we except
The Man-God's sacrosanct Humanity.
Resplendent Mirror of God's sanctity,
Encompassed round with glory like the sun,
The fairness of the moon beneath her feet,
And on her brow the diadem of stars;
Outshining saintly and Angelic Choirs,
And shedding beams of joy on each and all!
"O Mother mine!" I cry in ecstasy,
"Bequeathed as such to me on Golgotha!

How have I longed and pined thee to behold
In all thy regal state adorned and crowned,
Incomparably beautiful, O Queen!
Celestial Queen of Angels and of men,
Sole Empress of this mighty universe—
Enthroned suchwise by the Omnipotent
What day He bade His Angel cohorts bear
Thee, O Immaculate, with canticle
And festal song to thy right royal Court!
And now, O rapture! I behold thy face;
Thy more than seraph loveliness behold.
My soul is dazzled with thy Majesty;
I cast myself before thy glorious throne—
What! Queen of Heaven! and dost thou gracious deign
To raise me up and fold me to thy breast,
And give to me a Mother's welcome home!"

"Beloved child, thou'rt welcome to my arms
And to my kingdom, ransomed as thou art
By my dear Son on Calvary's red hill.
Into the fulness of my joy and bliss
Enter for aye, for what is mine is thine.

And now, dear Guide, conduct this favored soul
Unto the King of Kings, my Son divine,
Who with the Father and the Spirit reigns
Through endless ages co-substantially."

II

Lo! as she spoke, straightway enwraps me round
A wondrous blaze of light—as freighted with
A shower of golden flakes—that seems to come
From His resplendent Throne. Awe-struck I stand.
Steals o'er my Mother's face divine a smile
That tells my timorous soul there's naught to fear.
Then clinging to my Guide, I venture forth
To meet my glorious King, EMMANUEL.

If human beauty's feeble, passing rays
Can weave around the heart a magic spell—
If glimpse in vision of His beauteous Hand
Could raise Teresa into ecstasy—
What mind conceive, what tongue shall tell the bliss
Upon His Majesty Supreme to gaze
Amid the splendors of His Heavenly Court?
Ah! this a seraph's tongue could not portray:
Adoring silence then must hymn His praise.

III

Mute can I stay when rapt with feeling's tide?
"O Savior-God! behold thy ransomed slave!
O Sacred Wounds, that shine like glittering gems!

Sweet proofs of love that pledge me endless joy!
I fling me down at Thy dear wounded feet
And kiss them o'er and o'er adoringly
With burning love and gratitude profound."
As molten silver, liquid in the flame,
My soul afire is fused to ecstasy
When fondly clasped to His spear-riven Heart,
And bade to sit beside Him on His throne.
"Thrice welcome home at last, beloved child!
Well hast thou fought the fight, and won the
crown."

And as He speaks, He places on my brow
A glorious diadem, and in my hand
The palm of victory. Then once again
He gently folds me to His loving Breast.
O blessed moment, of all moments blest!
When resting tranquil on the Savior's Heart
Like Love's disciple in the Cenacle!
O toil! O pain! O all ye earthly woes!
Though ne'er so long and dire—what are ye now
I pray? Naught save a treasured memory
That adds a joy to my o'erbrimming cup.

Mid acclamations of the Heavenly Court
Am I—e'en I—with crown and palm adorned,
Triumphantly by my loved Angel led
To where a throne of glory stands prepared;

My name thereon with Love's own hand engraved
In golden characters of living light.
Dream of my golden dreams! Can this be true?

"But list, dear Guide! Though raptured here
I stand
At vision of the beauty of my King—
What of his Godhead, his Divinity?"
"The 'Light of Glory,' child, will soon be yours,
To elevate and strengthen you to bear
The dazzling splendors of Divinity."

IV

But hark to MUSIC'S swell! to organ, harp,
To psaltery and dulcimer and lute—
Yea, countless instruments of heavenly art—
That sweet outbreathe the very soul of song,
Evoked in tones of gold by Angel hands.
My soul respondent thrills with melody;
'Tis borne aloft on Music's golden wings;
It gushes forth, untaught, in harmony;
It joins the voices of the raptured blest
That blend divine with the Angelic Choirs,
Making full rife with hymn the ambrosial air.
The jasper walls and domes of gold awake,
Grow vibrant, and fling back the melody.
Heaven rings with jubilee, as, peal on peal,

Through pillared aisles hosannas loud resound!
All Eden throbs to Music's pulsing tide—
A swelling sea in sooth of psalmody.
It is as all creation—Angels, men,
Earth, Heaven, and all the spheres—had joined
In one majestic symphony of praise
And jubilation, to the Triune God—
Creation's concert in her Maker's praise!

V

How great, how passing great these raptures new
That onward came, like to so many rills
Dashing from mountain-tops, to seize upon
The favored soul and whelm it with delight!
And yet, not sated *wholly* is the thirst
Devouring it, like a consuming fire,
For union most complete with God, its Love.

Like a consuming fire! "Where then," I asked
"Is the contentment of beatitude;
Contented intellect in Truth possessed,
Contented will in the embrace of all
That it has sought as Good and Beautiful?
The more I see and hear, O Angel Guide,
The greater grows the longing of my soul;
And surely longing has no place in Heaven."

At this my Mentor smiled, as one well pleased,
And answered gracious, but with words of flame:
"Well hast thou reasoned, favored child, and deep
Hast thou experienced this longing for
A Something that will satisfy the Soul,
And fill its ceaseless crave with blissful rest.
The wealth of Heaven in part thine eye hath
seen—
Yet gates of pearl and floors of trodden gold,
The music thou hast heard from Angel choirs,
The very Angels in their glory crowned,
The Saints triumphant, nay our Heaven's Queen,
Are impotent to satiate the Soul:
For Him who made it, is the Spirit made;
In Him alone eternal rest it finds—
Eternal rest, beatitude complete."

VI

Adown Niagara's sides less headlong leaps
The swirling, foaming cataract, than flies
The emancipated spirit unto Him—
Its being's Source and all-ennobling End.

A flood of wonder-light!—The Light of Glory!
O God! My very God! My Sovereign Lord,
To Thee I fly! Thee, face to face at last
I see in Thy divine Sublimity!

On all Thy myriad Sovereign Attributes—
Thy goodness, wisdom, beauty, truth itself—
With eye undazzled and unseared I feast;
And feasting thus, what truths I comprehend!

O sacred *truth!* too rare where rank abound
The earthly weeds of falsehood, vain pretense,
Hypocrisy! But here thou reign'st, unstrained
And undiluted, in thy plenitude!
My thirsting mind is now inebriate
With a torrential flood of living truth.

VII

Within a chamber vast of treasured tomes—
The garnered wisdom of ten thousand years—
A scientist, for learning keen athirst,
While sipping honey-drops with eager zest
From some rare tract, eftsoons was heard exclaim:
"Oh! would that all this learning round about
Enshrined in vellum, shelf on shelf, were mine!"

That ardent wish, increased a million-fold,
In me is now fulfilled—Strew broadcast all
The books of mortal science till from view
They hide the face of Earth's broad amplitude;
My knowledge now would far outstrip it all.

VIII

The glorified intelligence beholds,
Writ on the scroll begun at dawn of time,
The truthful HISTORY of every race
That ever flourished on the face of earth—
Each nation's blossoming so fair; its growth
So radiant; its noontide vigor; then
Decadence, ending all in gloomy death.
Like a sequoia from a seedling sprung
That slowly thriving, lifts into the sky
His lofty head, outstretching lordly arms,
And, standing forth the monarch of the grove,
Rejoices in the glory of his might,
As if immortal and impregnable—
Till lo! the woodman's axe, or storm-king's wrath—
And prone in lowly dust the giant lies.

IX

Hast ever quaffed of the Pierian spring?
By man in wisdom's quest it ne'er was sipped,
Since 'twas but fiction of the Muse. But here,
In viewing face to face the Omniscient God,
I drink from Source Divine in deepest draughts
Knowledge and lore and truth intuitive—

'The whole domain of sciences profound.'
As some rare drawing, traced invisibly,
When held before a flame will spring to light;
Thus nature's riddles and life's mysteries,
Which so perplexed philosophers of earth—
All burst upon my wondering gaze, revealed
In the effulgence of the glowing sight
Of the All-knowing God who shaped the worlds.

X

Bright mirrored in the calm unfathomed deep
Of His eternal self-existing Essence
I calmly contemplate the ways, erstwhile
Obscure, of PROVIDENCE, which reason's ray
But dimly did illume. I clearly grasp
The skill wherewith in Wisdom's loom He weaved,
From tiny threads of everyday events,
The 'wildering web of all my chequered years.
Still wove He merciful the web anew,
My erring steps conducting at the last
To home and Father in the Promised Land.

XI

Yet loftier far than these, and more sublime,
The abysmal transcendental mysteries:
The One in Three and Three in One—to wit,

The TRIUNE GOD who, countless aeons through,
Was self-existing in beatitude;
The HYPOSTATIC nuptial bond in CHRIST
Of natures dual, human and divine,
Subsisting in the one Eternal Word;
The Sacrificial mystery of love,
The Man-God's LIFE-ATONEMENT to the Father,
Whereby humanity might be uplift—
If so it would—from out its fallen state
E'en to the mansions bright beyond the skies—
These mysteries divine unfolded are
To my enraptured gaze; e'en as a book
Unsealed, whose pictured page its story tells.

The great DESIGNS besides are now unveiled
Of Wisdom Infinite who builded so
The double universe or twofold world—
The Spirit-kingdom, the material realm—
With all their myriad beings, qualities,
Relations sweetly intermutual—
As to effect a grand harmonious whole.

XII

Immense the joy to revel thus in lore,
As in all other God-imparted gifts;
Yet not in gifts, though gifts were piled to Heaven,
As fabled Pelion on Ossa's mount,

But in the DEITY HIMSELF is centered
The Soul's absorbing, all-consuming love.

Mother, how thrills your heart of hearts, when eyes
New flushed with light and life look into yours!
How thrills your heart when tender infant hands
Outstretched demand the tribute of a fond
Embrace with all the soul of love aglow!
You know the meaning of the holiest love
That earth has power to give; and yet that love
Is but a shadow dim and from afar
Of love celestial, such as reigns above.

XIII

O fire, delightful fire of *Love Divine!*
Maternal love how sweet! But oh! to love
And to be loved by Love Himself in Person—
And this without a fear of end or change!
O Love Divine, all other loves beyond!
Abyss no seraph's plummet e'er could sound!
Thou glowing sea whose tides are ever full!
Aeons have passed, but not thy golden floods;
When time is o'er thy tides shall still roll on.

Unchain the Fancy; send it forth to roam;
Through the expanse of God's wide universe

On lightning pinions let it wing its flight.
The heights and depths enjoin it to explore;
Suffer no nook to go unvisited.
Where, prithee, shall this Fancy find a love
So strong, so wondrous, ardent, fathomless
As God's eternal love for sons of men?

Beneficent, all-conquering is His love;
Else why a Bethlehem? A Golgotha?
And why the Banquet of the Cenacle?
Ah! 'tis to reach and conquer human hearts
And lead them, joyous captives, to His realm—
Resplendent trophies of Almighty Love!
When Love's Apostle, from the topmost peak
Of inspiration's mount, sang "God is Love"
He voiced the Soul of God's Beneficence—
The starting point and goal of all God's works.
Yea, God is Love, All Love, Substantial Love!

Then oh! the perfect transport of delight,
When Love Eternal opes His Bosom wide—
Like ocean's mighty arms outstretched—to clasp
In fond embrace the timorous pilgrim soul,
And welcome it to its Eternal Home!
Immersed am I in the Divinity:
Into the ocean depths of Light and Life
I plunge and lose myself—Yea, lose myself—
Yet more than ever find myself my own.

"O Father mine! O God! Though unimpaired
Is my identity, I feel—I know,
In very sooth, that I am deified!"

XIV

United thus essentially to Him
Who is Essential Love, my life is love;
And love, my life in all reality.
That cycles moments seem, wakes no surprise;
For now the vastness of my spirit's void,
And crave for bliss is sated to the full.
My peace is the unruffled, placid lake;
My joy the shoreless and unfathomed deep!

Epilogue

BUT cease, my feeble Muse; nor longer seek
To reach the heights of this supernal theme.
Pray, tell me: Can an infant comprehend
The fire that burns in the poetic breast?
Can he, of sight devoid from birth, drink in
The fairy beauty of the carmine rose—
The witching splendors of the orient sun?
As well might we essay to grasp and limn
The joys and glories of the Heavenly Land.

If he of Tarsus, who to Heaven was rapt—
If John the Seer of Patmos' prison isle
Ne'er rested eagle-plume till he had reached
The very Essence of the Deity
Enthroned upon the Mount Divine, and basked
Unscorched, unscathed in God's own splendor's blaze—
If these, with souls aflame and tongues afire,

Failed utterly, as stricken dumb, to tell
What things ineffable had smote their sight—
Shall tongue like mine the infinite essay?

To ponder this, howbeit, were wisdom's part:
If Heaven were only what we have portrayed
Who, to possess it, would not do and dare?
Who would not dash through tempest, flood and
fire;
And eager all the Martyrs' woes endure?

O Happy Land, whose roses know no thorns;
Whose bowers no fickle larkspur e'er disclose.
Thrice blessed Salem! Eden of delights!
E'en as the parchéd roe for cooling spring,
The soul—Oh! how it throbs and yearns for thee!
On swiftly-soaring pinions of desire
It eager flies to feast on all thy charms.
O Heaven! O soul-entrancing Paradise!
Thou realm of rest, beyond the shoals of time!
Thou land of Life! Our own eternal Home!

NOTES AND ANNOTATIONS

PROLOGUE

15. The poet's picture of the anxious minds of pilgrims leaving their old-home shores touches a tender spot in every heart, for we all have a deep instinct of home-love, and of the anxious hours that go before the making of a new home.

Pilgrims, in another, and a still graver sense, we shall all of us be some day, when, forsooth, death sends us on a final pilgrimage from home and friends, a pilgrimage relieved by prayer, not by letters, of our friends.

The "Promised Land of Paradise" does give us heart for the journey, but not without a note of anxiety over our safe arrival at the hoped-for haven of all delights—God's presence in Paradise.

16:9. *With hope's bright bow.* (See Gen. ix. 11–16.)

16:18. *more than agitated dust.* Man is indeed formed of clay, and "unto dust shall he return" (Gen. iii. 19); but the poet alludes to him as also a soul, burdened with anxiety and fear.

16:19. *more than wandering dream.* Not only is man an anxious soul; he is one who stands on a sure knowledge of a future life of boundless happiness, if he loves God and serves Him.

17:1. *The great Apostle.* St. Paul, rapt in vision, looked down on earth, and announced as God's truth that "no lasting city have we here, but look for one that is to come" (Heb. xiii. 14). The poet will now tell us of his visit to the city "that is to come"—at the end of our pilgrimage.

19:3. *halcyon peace.* Still, reposeful. The halcyon is a bird of legendary lore which awaited a quiet atmosphere and sea before laying her eggs, close to the seashore, at the winter solstice. She was the weather prophet of long ago in the stern north. The word is now used as an adjective, like "winter" in the "winter solstice."

19:5. *City of God.* Another title for Heaven.

19:6. *whose walls are jasper.* Jasper is a hard stone of several colors that takes a fine polish. The poet proceeds to give a beautiful description of Heaven, as seen in his Vision. For this purpose he utilizes a wide knowledge of the most precious and the most beautiful things of earth, in order to warm and delight the imagination of the reader. Gold, diamonds, pearls, light, color, music, and other sources of earthly joys are applied suggestively to describe the beauty of Heaven.

Our human language has not words capable of describing the spiritual charms of Heaven; hence we speak of them in the most sublime terms of which our present experience of life gives us command. The Bible freely uses a like strain of

symbolical words in descriptive passages. (See Apocalypse xxi–xxii. 5.)

19:10. *With flowers ambrosial.* Ambrosia is a plant spoken of by classic writers as a food fit for the gods, and capable of conferring immortality.

19:14. *Groves amaranthine.* The unfading groves. "The only amaranthine flower on earth is Virtue" (Cowper).

19:15. *lustrous light.* That is, brightly shining.

20:13. *Tree of Life.* The Tree of Life is spoken of in the Apocalypse xxii. 2, as growing on both sides of the River of Life, that flows from the Throne of God and the Lamb. It bore twelve fruits, one every month, and the leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the Nations. The Catechism gives us the same spiritual teaching under the title of the Twelve Fruits of the Holy Ghost, which come to us from the stream of Grace that flows from the Throne.

20:5. *shimmering cataracts.* Rapidly changing reflections of light from the broken waters of the cataract.

20:7. *fields elysian.* Were sung by the classic poets as the heaven of their heroes.

20:8. *The Vale of Cashmere.* A high valley of great beauty in a mountainous region of Hindustan, and noted for its healthful climate. Cf.

Moore's *Lalla Rookh,* opening stanzas of Paradise and the Peri.

20:8. *Bandusian fount.* A noble fountain near Venusia in Italy, the birthplace of Horace, who immortalized it in song. (Cf. Horace, Lib. III, Ode 13.)

20:9. *Evanish.* An old and poetic form of "vanish."

20:10. *The soaring wings of Fancy.* Fancy helps us, in our reveries, to visit other regions than the commonplace world affords us; hence we speak of Fancy's soaring wings; but even Fancy at its best is unequal to the splendors of Heaven.

20:12. *opes.* Old and poetic form of "opens."

20:14. *earthly travail.* That is, the workaday business of life.

20:15. *Everest peak.* In the Himalayas, five and one-half miles high. The highest known mountain in the world.

20:18. *As stars are quenched.* That is, outshone by the sun.

20:19. *bliss without alloy.* Alloy is the base metal mixed with a pure metal, in order to work the latter or to cheapen it. All earthly joys are mixed with some tinge of sadness or pain.

20:24. *Oh! Angel dear . . . Remove the veil.* The veil that barred "free converse" between the man and the angel was the man's own body, which was provided with eyes, ears and tongue for equal converse with his own kind. These organs were

of no avail for communication with the angel who had no body to be seen, no ears to hear and no tongue to speak.

St. Paul used the same word "veil" to explain how his body stood between him and Christ in the vision that converted him from a persecutor into an apostle (Heb. x. 20).

21:9. *many a covert snare.* Covert, concealed —as the snare of a hunter—hidden pitfalls (Ps. xc. 3). The allusion is to the deceitfully pleasant ways of sin which ensnare and ruin the soul.

21:25. *take me Heavenward.* The poet's soul is filled with an intense craving for a sight of the Angel's Home; and, in his hunger for the experience, he feels himself putting on the qualities of his companion and friend, which will enable him to reach Heaven, under the Angel-friend's wing.

22:2. *Transmuted.* Changed in nature, substance, or form. The poet is now exalted out of his old self into a new spirit of high and unrestrained spiritual adventure.

22:7. The Angel Guardian is now no longer behind the veil, but face to face, so to speak, and open to the fullest exchange of ideas.

22:14. *albeit good sooth to tell.* That is, although the very truth to tell, "he uttered not . . . a sound."

22:16. *But mirrored.* Between the Angel and the soul now passed the thoughts, without the

labor of words or of hearing.—Compare the silent exchange of thought between devoted friends.

22:18. *Voiced humanly.* The poet now translates the Angel's thoughts into human language.

23:2. *And bide awhile.* It was a life-long passion for God and Heaven that won the great favor of the Vision Beatific. Even as the . . .

23:4. . . . *yearning of the Magdalene.* Mary Magdalene, the Penitent, was the first to visit the grave of her lost God, and first to announce the marvel of the Resurrection.

23:6. *Begot the blossom.* The *fruition fair* was the discovery that the Christ of her loving worship has triumphed over death and the grave.

23:15. *On pinions of the soul's impelling will.* In answer to the invitation of the Angel to behold in review the marvels of Heaven, the poet, aflame with desire, flies aloft with the Angel and tells the story of the flight.

24:1. *half the earth.* The moon's light illumines the half of the earth's orb presented to it.

24:5. *silver zones.* The color effect of the white, soft lights.

24:7. *checkered shadows.* The light of the moon passing to the ground through trembling branch and leaf.

24:16. *deep cerulean.* Blue, azure.

24:17. *but a drop.* That is, the moon, by comparison with the immensity of the universe, is but as a dew-drop.

24:19. *with speed, immeasurable.* With the speed of thought.

25:14. *the setting of the gem.* They are only at the far outposts of Heaven yet.—What the setting is to the gem, all material beauty is to Heaven.

25:18. *if verge there be.* Modern science has not found a limit to the stellar space; it speaks of distances from which light is coming that has been on the way millions of years, and always traveling at the rate of 186 thousand miles a second.

25:23. *to be or live.* The distinction is between material existence and life.

26:5. *The "possibles" are nowhere to be found.* Actual creation within the range of eye and instrument is the study of science; "possible" creation is hidden in the ocean of God's Omniscience.

26:11. *A feeling strange.* The poet is lost in the new immensity, and Fear enters his soul. He is, however, heartened by the Angel-guide's assuring smile.

26:18. *Hope's rainbow.* The rainbow is the promise of better conditions. (Cf. page 16, v. 9, and note thereon.)

27:4. *all words and thoughts . . . escape.* He is struck helplessly silent through sheer admiration.

27:10. *about that speck . . . to their own self undoing.* The stupendous world as unrolled in their swift journey has put our Earth into an in-

significant place, and has brought up the question, why should men go to their "undoing" over it, i.e. miss the aim of life in seeking wrong pleasures of earth.

27:15. *prismatic flames.* Light passed through a prism is resolved into elementary colors, from red to violet.—The rainbow is caused by the drops of moisture in the air, which act as prisms on the light.

27:21. *To form a halo.* The beauty of the colored rings seen at times around the sun and the moon is due to the prismatic colors. These rings are imitated by artists, to form haloes around the heads of saints.

29:1. *The Empyrean.* That is, the highest heaven where, according to the Ancients, purest fire and light have their home. It is "blue" because the other elementary colors are absorbed by interfering particles in our higher atmosphere. Our sunrises and sunsets are red because of similar "interferences" which stop the other colors. In the poem it means the highest Heaven where the Deity manifests Himself to the Blessed.

29:2. *in manifested light.* God's power extends everywhere; He discloses His Presence more strikingly in the light.

29:4. *At magic touch.* No visible hand opens the gates; they swing open at the will of the Angel.

29:6. *wild with ecstasy.* The soul's condition where man, in a rapture of love, contemplates the glory of God.

29:15. *New-ransomed by the Lamb.* St. John, speaking of the Saviour, says: "Behold the Lamb of God; behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world."

29:15. *New-ransomed.* The ever-renewed saving of souls through the Crucifixion of the Lamb of God.

30:5. *lucent beams.* Shining rays of light.

30:8. *in glory iridescent.* In many-colored splendor.

30:9. *whelming them.* Completely enveloping and filling them with delight.

30:14. *The Hallowed Throne.* Sacred Throne.

30:15. *unveils to rapture's gaze.* God enables the saints to see and rejoice in His majesty and beauty.

30:19. *the Sacred Mount.* Of the Hallowed Throne.

30:21. *the Nine Angelic Choirs.* Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominations, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Cherubim, and Seraphim.

30:22. *As Alp o'er Alp.* As among the mountains there are greater and lesser, so saint differs from saint in glory.

30:23. *Michael.* St. Michael as chief led the hosts of Heaven against the rebel Lucifer. He is frequently depicted in Christian art. One of the most celebrated paintings is that of St. Michael crushing the dragon, by the famous painter Guido Reni (1575–1641). It is hung in the Church of the Capuchins in Rome and is one of the world's masterpieces.

31:3. *Gabriel.* St. Gabriel announced to Zachary the coming birth of John the Baptist and brought the great Message to Mary, the Virgin Mother of the Messias.

31:6. *Raphael.* Raphael accompanied Tobias

on an important journey, to guide and safeguard him, and only revealed himself on their return home, enabling Tobias to cure instantly the blindness of his aged father. (Cf. The Book of Tobias xii.)

31:17. *first fair blossoms.* Angels were created first of all, and they best reflect the Beauty and the Power of God.

31:19. *plastic Hand.* Skilled to mold or fashion any material.

32:4. *Their wanderings are o'er.* The simile is borrowed from the wanderings of the Israelites in the Egyptian desert during their exile from the Promised Land.

32:6. *Full basking.* Completely happy, living in the Light of God's Beauty and rejoicing in the Divine Welcome.

32:6. *Light Ineffable.* Beyond the power of words to describe.

32:9. *Supernal Beauty. . . . A little glance . . . instant stilled.* The Divine Beauty and Presence is beyond the gift of our souls to understand, and beyond our strength to sustain; therefore God prepares the choice souls of Heaven with special graces which enlarge their understanding, and also their capacity of spiritual joy. Amongst us, here below, the excess of joy is sometimes fatal.

32:14. *Man's vaunted loveliness . . . melts.* The beauty of youth is lost in the wrinkles and feebleness of old age.

32:20. *The Day King's.* The telescope reveals the "spots" on the face of the sun; the rose keeps a guard of thorns to bar familiar touch.

33:3. *Reality.* With us beauty is only skin-deep, mere form and appearance. In God, it is God Himself.

33:6. *like Selmon's.* Selmon is a snow-capped mountain in Arabia. (Cf. Ps. lxvii. 15.)

33:12. *the Iberian Maid.* The Spanish Maid, Teresa.

33:13. *Mystic Doctor.* Learned in the doctrines of the Faith, and in the principles of spiritual health and life.

33:14. *Carmel.* The summit of a mountain ridge of Palestine. The Carmelites take their name from it.

33:14. *Undaunted child.* St. Teresa suffered from infirm health, and, so close was she in spirit to Christ on the Cross, that her constant prayer to Him was either to suffer or to die. She was born in 1515.

33:15. *seraph soul.* Seraphim, the highest order of angels, burn with divine love—and so did St. Teresa.

33:16. *tabernacle.* A temple, dwelling or shelter.

33:17. *Sweet blending.* Blending of strength and sweetness—blending of power in action and love in contemplation.

33:18. *Siena's Maid.* St. Catherine was born A.D. 1347 in Siena, Tuscany, and was filled with a deep knowledge that was heaven inspired.

34:1. *Two Sovereign Pontiffs.* They are Gregory XI and Urban VI.

34:5. St. Rose of Lima lived a life of constant suffering in Lima, Peru, where she died when only thirty years of age. The name given her at baptism (Rosa Santa Maria) had for source, besides her likeness to a rose, the direct command of Our Lady herself—hence was "Heaven-stamped."

34:9. St. Bridget, the "Lily of Kildare," known also as the "Mary of Erin," was born in the fifth century in Louth. (Her parents are said to have been baptized by St. Patrick.) She founded at Kildare the first religious house of women in Ireland. So numerous were her miracles that the Bollandists term her a Thaumaturga or wonder-worker. She died about 523, and is ranked after St. Patrick as the "Second Patron Saint" of the country.

34:12. *Fount of Life.* That is, God, the Source of all Life.

34:12. *Penitents.* Mary Magdalene, Feast, July 22. St. Mary Magdalene is one of the few saints who had personal contact with our Lord Himself, and she holds an unique place of honor in having had our Lord as her champion against the Pharisees, who persecuted her, and against His disciples, who complained of the waste of the

precious ointment. (See St. Matt. xxvi. 6–13; St. John xii. 3–8.)

35:10. *Alabaster box . . . spikenard.* The alabaster of the New Testament is often called the Oriental alabaster. This kind is found in caves in limestone regions, for instance in Algeria. It is a translucent stone of a yellowish color, and is used for boxes to contain precious materials. Spike-nard is a plant with pointed leaves or spikes, from which was extracted an ointment (nard), which had an agreeable perfume.

35:12. The Pharisees were great sticklers for the observance of good form in all the details of prayer and fasting, and carried their nicety so far that they would not associate with people of an unceremonious habit. In secret they threw off restraint, and were, besides, full of pride, and haughty in their bearing.

35:13. *Jesus shrank not.* The Pharisees knew of the wayward life of Magdalene and expected Christ to reject her tears and worship, but Christ taught them that "charity covers a multitude of sins" and that she anointed Him for His coming death.

35:19. *Calvary's ruby tide.* The flowing blood of Christ.

35:21. *Soft zephyr sighs.* The original zephyr was so called in Greece because, there, the west winds are always soft and pleasant. The poet

applies the word to the gentle Christian sighs of repentance for wrong-doing.

The poet now continues the Roll of Honor, and comes to the Founders of the Orders in the Church who like giants have done heroic work in spreading the Gospel, thereby winning distinguished places near our Lord.

36:10. *the gyves of sin.* The fetters that bad habits put upon one's Christian freedom.

36:11. St. *Benedict* is the Patriarch of the Western monks. His order has given many Saints and Pontiffs to the Church. The Benedictine monks were the first to multiply the copies of the Scriptures by writing out the whole Bible. They hid away the manuscripts in cloistered crypts, where the invading Goths and Vandals would not find them. These marauders came down from the regions of the Baltic and the Danube and finally overthrew the decaying Roman Empire. Benedict died A.D. 543; his feast falls on March 21.

36:13. *parchments, proof against . . . time.* Moths are the insects that eat up clothing and the like, but they cannot devour parchment—made from the skins of animals.

36:18. *Bernard.* Bernard was born near Dijon in France in 1091, and died in 1153 in his abbey of Clairvaux. He was proclaimed a Doctor of the Church by Pius VIII, because of his great learning, and his numerous books on Scripture and

Ascetical Theology. He preached the Second Crusade in 1146.

36:22. St. Francis of *Assisi* was born at Assisi in Italy, A.D. 1182. He early showed a lavish hand in giving to the poor, which so disturbed his father's mind concerning the fate of the family property that in the presence of the Bishop of Assisi he demanded him to give up his right of inheritance. This he did, and then proceeded to give himself and all his life to God in the service of the poor.

36:23. *St. Dominic.* A most fervent and energetic champion of the faith who was born in Old Castile in Spain, A.D. 1770. He established the devotion of the Rosary in his effort to stir up the piety of the faithful against the ravages of the Albigensian heresy. He founded the Order of Preachers known as the Dominicans.

37:3. St. Ignatius *Loyola* was born at Loyola in Spain, A.D. 1480. Fighting at the siege of Pamplona he was grievously wounded, and came out of his enforced rest an ardent Knight of the Cross. To prepare for his new work in life he hid himself in the cave of Manresa where he devoted himself for a year to prayer and all manner of penances. Then hanging up his sword at the altar of the Queen of Heaven he ventured to face the world of sin and unbelief with no other arms than the book of Spiritual Exercises which he had written during his stay at Manresa.

37:9. *De Paul.* St. Vincent was born in 1575 in the South of France. Taken prisoner by the Moors he spared no efforts to convert the pirates to the Christian faith. He providentially made his escape, and returned to France. He founded the congregation of the Mission, and the universally known Sisters of Charity.

37:12. *The Angels of the Battlefield.* The Sisters of Charity are so called because of their fearless, efficient and tender services to the wounded and dying in times of war.

37:15. *The army glorious.* That is, the Martyrs.

37:17. *the Baptist.* He is well called by the poet the "Desert-Trumpet," for he was the herald of Christ and made his home in the desert.

37:19. *The lash.* John was the scourge of King Herod's vices. Urged on by her wicked mother, Salome her dancing daughter asked for the head of John the Baptist. Herod had it brought to her on a platter.

37:21. *the brood of vipers.* A Scripture phrase applied to the Pharisees.

37:23. *Stephen! proto-martyr.* Proto=first—first martyr for Christ.

38:3. *Lawrence.* Burned to death for Christ, A.D. 258. The Emperor Valerian imagined that Lawrence had the custody of immense treasures of the Church. When it was found that all had been divided among the poor, Lawrence was

tortured, and finally burned on the gridiron. A notable collection of his relics in the royal palace of Spain gives its name to the Escurial (gridiron).

38:4. Blessed Oliver *Plunkett* was born in 1629 in Meath, Ireland. In Rome he was ordained Priest, and then consecrated Archbishop of Armagh, Ireland. Full of zeal he underwent great hardships in the performance of his pastoral duties. He championed the cause of Catholic education, opened a high school at Drogheda, and invited Jesuit Fathers from Rome to take charge of it. During a fierce religious persecution he was seized in Dublin and by order of the English government carried to England and martyred at Tyburn, London, July 11, 1681.

38:5. *Eire*. Poetical name for Ireland.

38:6. *the Areopagite*. Denis the Areopagite was converted by St. Paul (Acts xvii. 34). He was sent by Pope St. Clement to evangelize Gaul and was martyred at Paris, A.D. 95. The Areopagus was Supreme Court of Athens in the days of its fame and glory.

38:9. *Cecilia* was born at Rome and martyred there under Septimus Severus about the year A.D. 200. She is one of the most famous virgin martyrs. She has been chosen as Patroness of Music.

38:11. St. *Agnes* was but a child of thirteen when she gladly accepted martyrdom (A.D. 304) in defense of her faith and chastity.

38:12. *Catherine.* St. Catherine of Alexandria in Egypt was of noble birth and learned in the sciences. When but eighteen years of age she upbraided the Emperor Maximinus for his cruel persecution of the Christians. He summoned numerous learned philosophers to induce her by specious reasoning to apostatize. She refuted and converted them by sound argument, whereupon the Emperor ordered them to be put to death. When the Empress and Porphyry, Commander of the soldiery, visited her in the dungeon, she converted them, and they too won the martyr's crown. Then the tyrant, furious, condemned her to be torn to death on a spiked wheel, but at her touch it flew to pieces. She was then beheaded, A.D. 310. Hence she is represented by artists with the broken wheel and sword.

38:16. *St. Boniface* is venerated as the Apostle of Germany. He was an Anglo-Saxon born in Devonshire, England. He was sent by Pope Gregory II to evangelize Germany (A.D. 716). He passed twenty-two years in this arduous work and was crowned by martyrdom for the Faith in the year 755.

38:18. Blessed Thomas *More*, the great English Chancellor, received the palm of martyrdom from Henry VIII because he resisted Henry's unlawful divorce and his usurpation of supremacy in religion. He was beheaded on Tower Hill, London, July 6, 1535.

38:18. Blessed Edmund *Campion*, S.J., born in London, 1540, joined the Society of Jesus in Rome at the age of twenty-nine. Returning to England, 1580, he converted many to the Faith. He caught the sinister attention of Queen Elizabeth by the strong presentation of the Pope's claim to religious obedience, so that he became known as the "Pope's champion." After many cruel tortures he was hanged at Tyburn, at the age of forty-one.

38:20. St. *Joan* of Arc, called the Maid of Orleans, was born in Lorraine, France, in 1411. She was distinguished from childhood for her virtues and singular piety. Under the inspiration of Heaven she led the Catholic armies against the unjust invaders of her country, and brought peace to France. She was taken prisoner by the English and condemned to be burned alive. She suffered at Rouen on May 30, 1431, and died with the name of Jesus on her lips.

The Divine Mission of the Maid of Orleans was soon established, and after five centuries the Catholic Church has formally canonized her.

39:14. *Fathers and Doctors of the Church* are titles given to those who combined great intellectual gifts with deep knowledge and saintly piety. The Fathers belong to the first few centuries of Christianity.

39:16. St. *Augustine* was born in Tagasta, near Algiers, in Africa, A.D. 354. After a wayward youth, he was converted when thirty-three

years old to faith and piety by the prayers of his mother, St. Monica, and the eloquence of St. Ambrose. After some time he was consecrated Bishop of Hippo. By his great zeal and learning he repelled the attacks of Manichaeans and other heretics. Of his numerous works the best known are *The City of God* and his *Confessions.*

39:16. St. *Ambrose* was born in France. So talented and learned was he that when twenty-one he was made Governor of Northern Italy. While he was preparing for baptism, the Archbishop of Milan died. As Governor he was present to maintain order at the election of a new Archbishop. It is said that a child in the assembly cried out, "Ambrose for Bishop." It became general and, being endorsed by the proper authorities, Ambrose was quickly baptized, confirmed, ordained priest, and consecrated Bishop in December, 374.

He was the champion of religious liberty against usurping secular powers. He made the Emperor Theodosius the Great do public penance for his massacre of Thessalonica. His writings on the doctrines of the Church are voluminous. In St. Peter's at Rome his statue is represented as holding up, together with those of Saints Augustine, Athanasius and Chrysostom, the chair of St. Peter.

39:16. St. *Basil* the Great came of a family of saints. He was born at Caesarea and became celebrated for his wonderful talents and

learning. He was consecrated Bishop of Caesarea 370, and distinguished himself in the Council of Nice. He is ranked as the foremost commentator of the Bible and as the greatest orator of his time. He is represented in art as standing near a fire with a dove perched on his arm. (Cf. Cardinal Newman's *Life of St. Basil.*)

39:16. St. *Jerome,* born in Dalmatia, studied in Rome, Gaul, and Greece. The greatest scholar of his age, he led the life of a hermit in the desert of Syria. This famous Doctor of the Church compiled the Vulgate edition of the Bible which has ever since been the authorized text used by the Church. He died at Bethlehem, A.D. 420.

St. John *Chrysostom,* surnamed the Golden-tongued on account of his marvelous eloquence, was born in Syria, A.D. 344. His merit raised him to the See of Constantinople (397). His zeal in reforming that dissolute city made him enemies, chief amongst whom was the Empress Eudoxia. In consequence he was banished into exile in Cappadocia, where he died of many hardships, A.D. 407. His writings are amongst the most valuable of those of the Fathers of the Church.

39:17. Thomas *Aquinas,* Doctor of the Church, is the great exponent of Scholastic philosophy and famed as the "Angelic Doctor," on account of his extraordinary intellectual gifts and attainments. He was born near Aquino in Italy,

1225. He joined the Dominican Order, and was a distinguished graduate of the University of Paris where he taught and wrote brilliantly. He produced voluminous works on Philosophy and Theology that are unsurpassed. His famous *Summa Theologica* deals with all Catholic dogma.

40:1. *Peter.* Proto Pontiff, i.e. first Pope.

40:3. *Claviger.* Key-bearer. Our Lord gave him the "Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."

40:6. *Paul.* At first a ruthless persecutor of the Christians, he became a "Vessel of Election" after the miraculous call of Christ. (Acts ix.)

40:9. *In Gentile lands.* Pagan countries.

40:11. St. Francis *Xavier,* Apostle of the Indies, was born in Pamplona, Spain, A.D. 1506. He was one of the first disciples and companions of St. Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus. With Bourdaloue we may say that in him were renewed all the wonders worked by the Apostles.

In converting multitudes of souls he traveled a distance equal to three times the earth's circumference. He baptized more than 1,200,000 heathens, preached the Gospel in over 200 kingdoms, even penetrating into Japan. He died in Sancian, a Chinese island, near Macao, A.D. 1552.

40:12. St. Peter *Claver* labored among the negroes in Carthagena, South America, till his death in 1654. At his canonization by Leo XIII he was made "Apostle of the Negroes." He belonged to the Society of Jesus.

40:14. St. *Vincent Ferrer* was born at Valentia, in Spain, and died in Brittany, 1419. He spent his life in bringing peace to the factious spirits of the Church, during the fifteenth century, over the rival claims of Pontifical parties in Rome.

40:17. *Eire's Loved Apostle.* St. Patrick. He was born in the fifth century. In his tender years he was carried into captivity, and taken to Ireland. Escaping providentially, he traveled through Britain, Gaul, France, and Italy. In Rome he was consecrated Bishop and received his mission to Ireland from Pope Celestine. By his preaching and miracles he soon converted the entire nation. After incredible labors, he died gloriously about A.D. 464. He is well termed "Eire's Loved Apostle."

40:22. *golden garnering.* The golden harvest of Souls.

41:1. *Anne and Joachim.* The parents of Mary Immaculate.

41:2. *Aurora fair.* Bright morning light of the Coming Christ, the Sun of Justice.

41:6. *Joseph.* The Protector and Provider of Mary and Jesus.

41:8. *Angelic ward.* Chaste keeper of the "fair flower," Mary.

41:13. *Earth's trinity.* Christ, Mary and Joseph.

41:15. *Come, ransomed soul.* The call of the Holy Family to the souls redeemed by the Saviour.

41:19. *Howbeit.* Although.

43:6. *leaden scepter.* The heavy ruling hand of death has no place in Heaven.

43:11. *encrown.* Must not the joy of reunion with our own in Heaven exceed all former joys? But better and greater are yet to come.

45:15. *on Golgotha.* The Hebrew word for Calvary, the hill of skulls.

46:6. *Suchwise.* In such manner, i.e. as empress of the Universe.

46:25. *co-substantially.* Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are One Substance, though Three Persons.

47:8. *Emmanuel.* God with us.

47:17. *Adoring silence.* Lacking fitting words. Silence is here personified and sings the Man-God's praise.

48:6. *fused to ecstasy.* As if melted by the "burning love."

48:17. *in the Cenacle.* Like St. John at the Last Supper.

49:7. *What of his Godhead.* The vision, so far, portrays our Lord in His Sacred Humanity, and it now promises a new grace to enable us to bear up under the "dazzling splendors of Divinity."

49:11. *psaltery and dulcimer and lute.* Three stringed instruments.

49:20. *Making full rife.* The air resounding with the hymn. *Rife*=abounding.

50:1. *hosannas.* Hebrew acclamations.

50:3. *in sooth.* That is, in truth.

50:23. *longing has no place in Heaven.* That is, longing is unfulfilled desire, and Heaven satisfies all desire. This sentiment is approved by the Angel, who proceeds at once to promise that the Soul will now come to "beatitude complete" in beholding the Divine Sublimity.

52:5. *Where rank abound.* Rank growth of weeds on earth. *Rank*=luxuriant.

52:15. *eftsoons.* Again and again.

53:16. *Pierian spring.* Mount Pierus, situated in Thessaly, was dedicated to the Muses.

54:10. *self-existing essence.* God is the only eternal Being or Substance—no beginning, no changing, no ending.

54:12. *the ways . . . of Providence.* From reason and revelation we know that the Creator rules the world and all things therein. With infinite skill He weaves the web of our lives. And when we, alas, break the web by sin, He brings us back by the grace of repentance and thus takes up the tangled threads and weaves the web anew, till at the last, if only we cease from waywardness, He graciously leads us home to the Promised Land.

55:3. *The Hypostatic nuptial bond.* The fundamental union of the divine nature and the human in the divine Person of Christ. It was this union that gave to the sufferings of the Cross the value of Atonement through which all "humanity might be uplift" out of "its fallen state."

By this "hypostatic union" we became the brothers of Christ—were ennobled by the marriage of our nature to His Divine nature.

55:21. *to revel thus in lore.* That is, in the knowledge of the "Mysteries divine unfolded . . . to my enraptured gaze." (Cf. page 55, vv. 11–13.)

55:24. *fabled Pelion on Ossa's mount.* It is fabled—as Ovid, Virgil, and other pagan poets mention—that Ossa and Pelion (lofty mountains of Thessaly) were piled one on the other by the giants to scale the heavens.

57:13. *Love's Apostle.* St. John.

57:26. *find myself my own.* Though lost in the Divinity, self-consciousness comes back to reassure him of his "unimpaired" identity.

58:3. *I am deified.* Am become as God. "When He (God) shall appear we shall be like to Him; because we shall see Him as He is" (I St. John iii. 2); "I have said: You are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High (Ps. lxxxi. 6; cf. St. John x. 34 and II St. Peter i. 4).

58:8. *the vastness of my spirit's void.* Outside Heaven, man's soul never ceases to hunger for perfect happiness. A passing joy or interest is the most that earth affords. The "void" always returns. "Vanity of vanities and all is vanity," except to love God and serve Him. The heart was made for God, said St. Augustine, and only God can satisfy it to the full.

EPILOGUE

59:10. *he of Tarsus.* St. Paul, of Tarsus, in Cilicia, Asia Minor. St. Paul in the twelfth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians tells of his being caught up into paradise, and hearing secret words not to be uttered.

59:11. *If John the Seer.* That is, St. John, the Evangelist and Prophet, who wrote the wonderful and mysterious Apocalypse or Book of Revelation. He was banished by the Emperor Domitian to the Island of Patmos where he was inspired to write the Apocalypse.

59:12. *eagle-plume.* The Gospel of St. John contains the sublimest writing of all literature, reaching its highest in the "Last Gospel of the Mass" as kept always on the Altar—"In the beginning was the Word . . . ."

60:10. *fickle larkspur.* The larkspur (especially pink) symbolizes fickleness.

60:11. *Salem.* Same as Jerusalem. Here=the new Jerusalem—Heaven.

GLOSSARY

Abysmal: Unfathomably deep.
Acclaim: To hail admiringly.
Akin: In blood relationship.
Albeit: Although.
Amaranthine: Unfading, immortally fresh.
Amaze: Bewilderment, astonishment.
Ambrosial: Fragrant in odor, and delicious in taste. Food of the gods.
Attributes: Omnipotence, eternity, goodness, etc. Properties or qualities essentially belonging to God.
Aurora: The day-spring, the morning light.
Bastions: Strongly built and protecting stations in a wall of defense, by means of which a side attack may be made on besiegers of the wall between the bastions.
Bedight: Bedecked, dressed up.
Beneficent: Kind and good in action.
Bespeaking: Giving token of, showing high office in their robes.
Bide: Remain, abide.
Boon: Useful and pleasing favor.
Brooding: The eagle floating over an abyss with a watchful eye for prey. (Derived from birds and fowl brooding over their young.)
Carmine: A rich red color.
Celestial: Heavenly.
Cenacle: The room of the Last Supper.
Cerulean: The blue vault of the sky.
Chancellor: Title of the highest judicial officer.

Checkered: Variegated effect of crossing lines of light and shade.

Claviger: Bearer of the keys.

Cloistered Crypts: The monasteries had secret vaults (crypts) in which the monks kept, for safety, their Scripture copies.

Cohorts: Armed companies. (The cohort was the tenth of a legion, i.e. 500 to 600 men.)

Commune: To exchange thoughts and sentiments.

Comprise: Consist of, and include.

Constellation-like: Like one of the known clusters of stars.

Co-substantially: The Three Persons are one Substance.

Covert: Hidden, concealed.

Cycles: Periods of time, after which a new start is made; as a year, a century.

Decadence: Gradual decline and decay.

Diversified: Distinguished from one another in degree and kind of merit.

Donned: Put on for wear and use.

Dulcimer: An old Hebrew wind instrument. Some say it was a string instrument.

Effulgence: Shining brightness.

Eftsoons: Quickly, at once, and again.

Eire: Ireland.

Elysian: Supremely blest.

Elysian Palace: His Heavenly Palace.

Elysium: Home of all delights for the immortal dead of ancient times. The name is now poetically used for Heaven.

Emancipated: Rescued and freed.

Emmanuel: God with us.

Empyréan: The highest heavens, the home of purest fire and light, according to the ancients. The highest heaven where God manifests Himself to the blessed. (Primary accent on last syllable but one.)

Endued: An old form for endowed.
Enjoin it: Command or order it.
Epitaphs: Memorial inscriptions.
Erstwhile: Formerly.
Essay: To try, to endeavor.
Ethereal: The space filled with the ether.
Evangeled: Preached the Gospel.
Everest: A peak of the Himalayas about five and one-half miles high, the highest known mountain in the world.
Evoked: Called forth.
Fantasies: Dreamy imaginings, unfounded fancies.
Fraternize: To be on intimately friendly terms.
Fruition: Reward of good efforts, success, well-realized hope.
Garish: Dazzling, glaring light.
Garnered: Gathered and stored.
Garnering: Gathering the harvest, "the harvest home."
Garnished: Embellished, handsomely set off.
Golgotha: The Hebrew name for Calvary.
Guise: Having the appearance of men.
Gyves: Shackles or fetters.
Halcyon: Calm, undisturbed repose.
Heartening: Stimulating courage.
Hierarchies: Organized classes and orders of dignity.
Howbeit: However, notwithstanding.
Hypostatic: The union of the divine and the human natures, in the one Divine Person of Christ.
Identity: Individuality.
Illume: Throw light upon.
Impotent: Powerless, unable.
Impregnable: Unconquerable.
Inebriate: Full to capacity and overflowing.
Ineffable: Not to be described by mere words. Unutterable.
Inly: Interiorly.
Instinct: Natural impulsive inclination to praise God.
Intuitive: Known without reasoning, or effort to learn.

Iridescent: Rainbow-colored.
Irradiates: Sends out rays of light.
Kens: Knows.
Larkspur: A herb with clusters of blue flowers. Symbolic of fickleness or inconstancy.
Laud: Praise.
Limn: To paint, to describe.
Loom: A weaving machine.
Lore: Knowledge.
Lucent: Shining, bright.
Lunar: Pertaining to the moon.
Mantling: Spreading over gradually (like a blush on the cheek).
Mar it not: Do not spoil or blemish it.
Mart: The public market place.
Mode: Way, custom.
Murk: Darkness, blackness. (Cf. the "spots on the sun.")
Myriad: Thousands. (Literally 10,000.)
Omniscient: All-knowing.
Orbit: Circuit or pathway of the planets around the sun.
Orient: Rising, east.
Ossa: A mountain in Thessaly.
Pelion: A mountain in Thessaly.
Pinions: Wings.
Placid: Tranquil, unruffled.
Plastic: Supple and skilful in working material into good form.
Plummet: A line with a weight on the end for sounding depths.
Portals: Gateways or doorways.
Portray: To describe vividly by word or painting.
Primal: The first and original state of "nothingness."
Prismatic: The bright colors into which a prism resolves light.
Prithee: I pray thee.

Prone: Laid flat on the ground.
Proto-martyr: First martyr for Christ.
Psaltery: A Hebrew stringed instrument.
Quondam ruthless: *Former* pitiless persecutor.
Rank: Too vigorous growth (as with weeds).
Ransomed: All debts paid and freedom restored.
Ravished: Lifted out of himself with delight, enraptured.
Regal: Royal in splendor.
Responsive: Answering or responding.
Rife: Abounding.
Sacrosanct: Supremely holy, pre-eminently sacred.
Sagacious: Well-balanced judgment, wise.
Salem: Same as Jerusalem, Capital of King David.
Sated: Satisfied to fulness.
Satiate: To satisfy completely.
Scepter: Ornamental staff of royal authority.
Scroll: The written record of history.
Selmon: A mountain in Arabia.
Sequoia: A gigantic tree of the pine family—the mammoth redwood tree of California.
Setting: The protecting guard of diamonds and gems.
Sheathed: Put in its scabbard.
Shoals: Shallows, in which there is not free sailing.
Smote: Struck with force.
Sooth: Truth.
Splendent: Shining bright and fair, resplendent.
Stalwart: Strong and courageous.
Stay: Help, support, encouragement.
Stellar: Starlike.
Stellar worlds: Other astral worlds (like our sun and its planets).
Strown: Scattered profusely. Strewn, another form.
Subsisting: The real existence of Man and God in Christ.
Suchwise: In such way (as Queen of Angels).
Supernal: Heavenly, celestial.

Surcease: "Without surcease" means without stop or interruption.

Swirling: Eddying and whirling in movement.

Symphony: Harmonious blending of musical sounds; an elaborate musical composition for a full orchestra.

Tarsus: Birthplace of St. Paul in Cilicia, Asia Minor.

Terrestrial: Earthly.

Thongs: Whip-lashes, usually of leather.

Thraldom: Bondage, slavery.

Timorous: Nervously afraid.

Tomes: Large volumes of printed matter.

Torrential: Like a torrent.

Tract: A treatise on some special subject.

Transcendental: Surpassing our understanding.

Translucent: Permitting light, but not images to pass through.

Transmuted: Completely changed into another form and capacity.

Travail: Steady strain of hard work.

Triune: Three in One.

Trophies: Spoils of the enemies and captives as tokens of victory.

Unalloyed: Unmixed with inferior material.

Unfleshed: He shed, or discarded, the carnal and impeding qualities of the material body.

Unison: Perfect harmony.

Unscathed: Unharmed, unhurt.

Unseared: Unwithered, unscorched.

Valorous: Bravely courageous.

Vaunted: Boasted of.

Vellum: Calf-skin book-binding.

Vibrant: Quivering with tension.

Virgin consort: St. Joseph, chaste husband of Mary.

Vision Beatific: The happiness of seeing, knowing, and possessing God in Heaven.

Void: Emptiness, vacuum.
Ward: Guardian and provider.
Welded: Joined together inseparably as if with fire and hammer.
Whelming: Inundating, enveloping, saturating.
Wildering: Bewildering, growing confused with astonishment.
Wrought: Worked.
Yon: Yonder—chiefly poetic. At a distance within view.

Suggested Passages to Be Memorized

At the Option of the Teacher

CANTO FIRST

1. Stanza I complete.
2. Stanza II to page 21, v. 25.
3. Stanza V to page 24, v. 12.
4. Stanza VI, page 26, v. 6 to v. 19.
5. Stanza VII complete.

CANTO SECOND

1. Page 30, v. 1 to v. 19.
2. Page 32, v. 9 to page 33, v. 4.
3. Page 34, VI to end of page 35.
4. Stanza IX complete.
5. Stanza XIII complete.
6. Stanza XIV to v. 10, page 43.

CANTO THIRD

1. Stanza I to v. 16, page 46.
2. Stanza II complete.
3. Stanza III to v. 21, page 48.
4. Stanza IV complete.
5. Stanza VI complete.
6. Stanza VIII complete.
7. Stanzas IX and X complete.
8. Stanza XIII to v. 6, page 57.
9. Page 60, v. 4, to end.

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